



WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Endometriosis Unmasked

E Douglas Kihn, DOM, LAc (ret.)

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Endometriosis is an often-painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus – the endometrium – grows outside the uterus.
- As we gain the patient's trust and respect with our amazing techniques, we can put on our detective hats and track down the causes of her blood stagnation.
- Problems like endometriosis are usually the result of a "perfect storm": several factors coming together at the same time.

Endometriosis is an often-painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus – the endometrium – grows outside the uterus. Endometriosis most commonly involves the ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining the pelvis.

[Endometriosis](#) can cause pain – sometimes severe, especially before and during menstrual bleeding. Fertility problems and growths may also develop.<sup>1</sup>

### Beyond Management

Conventional (emergency) medicine claims that the cause is unknown – and unknowable, with the conviction that there is no way to prevent endometriosis. The [Mayo Clinic](#), for example, only talks about *managing* the condition:

*"Endometriosis can be a challenging condition to manage. An early diagnosis, a multidisciplinary*

*medical team and an understanding of your diagnosis may result in better management of your symptoms.”<sup>2</sup>*

In early March of this year, I ran across [an interview](#)<sup>3</sup> with a young woman named Bindi Irwin [daughter of the late conservationist Steve Irwin], who said doctors had dismissed her pain, fatigue, and nausea for 10 years. The pain was always worse around menstrual time. They probably thought it was “just PMS,” for which they can only prescribe sedatives. She finally received a diagnosis – endometriosis. A decade of this disorder contributed to 37 lesions, which had to be surgically removed.

A cursory Google search produced several sources stating that endometriosis affects 10-11% of American women. That is a serious number. Practitioners of Chinese medicine have no cause or reason to dismiss premenstrual pain and other menstrual symptoms as minor inconveniences that can only be “managed.” We have in our arsenal the medical theory and clinical weapons to defeat endometriosis and prevent it from returning.

### Chinese Medicine Diagnosis

As always, a Chinese medicine diagnosis begins with the eight principles. We can begin with the obvious: classifying endometriosis as *interior excess*. An excess is something that must be removed. That excess is a bit of stuck endometrium / blood which has nowhere to go. *Yin* / material that is stagnated will generate excess *yang* in the forms of pain and heat. That is *yang* within *yin*.

All pain is stagnation. The main symptom, “sharp, stabbing pain in the lower abdomen,” points a finger straight at liver blood-*xue* stagnation, referring of course to the liver channel / energy which circles the genitals, and dominates the uterus and all reproductive activity.

### A Simple Treatment Plan

- Remove the excess – the stagnant blood and *qi* – from the liver and kidney channels
- Prevent stagnation from building up again in the lower burner (or anywhere else), by replacing unhealthy habits with healthy ones

Chinese pharmacopeia is top-heavy with blood and *qi* activators, many of which are utterly ruthless opponents of stagnant blood, especially in the genital region. They crush, blast, abuse, dissolve, poison, kick butt, and over time treat stagnant, painful bits of stagnant blood/*xue* in the cruelest manner.

Acupuncture’s main claim to fame is its marvelous ability to activate and resolve all kinds of stagnation anywhere in the body / mind. This is especially true for all kinds of menstrual pain and other menstrual problems. The application of needles at reactive sites along the liver, gallbladder and kidney channels at the right time will usually provide immediate and in some cases, lasting, relief.

If the young woman mentioned above had first scheduled an appointment with a practitioner of Chinese medicine, she could have saved herself a decade of misery.

### Tracking Down the Cause

As we gain the patient’s trust and respect with our amazing techniques, we can put on our detective hats and track down the causes of her blood stagnation. We acknowledge that problems like

endometriosis are usually the result of a “perfect storm”: several factors coming together at the same time. Here are four common contributors we would want to investigate:

- A lack of daily exercise runs counter to our evolutionary design, and sets the body / mind up for all kinds and degrees of problems that result from a stagnant body.
- Chronic anxiety and worry can cause women to tighten the lower body in a fight-or-flight condition and keep it tight. During the final week before onset of bleeding, tight muscles can prevent the body from entirely removing all of the lining, even squeezing some of the material out of the uterus and into the surrounding areas, where it gets stuck and unhappy.
- A woman at or over 20% body fat provides plenty of extra nutrition/*yin* with which to form an extra-thick uterine lining. This could be a problem. Too much blood might cause leakage in the uterine wall. In addition, excess body fat decreases circulation and increases overall stagnation in the body.
- Sexual repression, from my experience, is the most common factor in the development of endometriosis, ovarian cysts and uterine growths. It is also the most difficult to discuss with patients, and represents the greatest challenge for remission and prevention.

The sexual repression of both genders is a universal health problem in every society in the world today. This is especially true for girls and women. I’ve known women of all ages and walks of life who have never experienced a sexual orgasm and can barely stand to touch themselves. They have many reasons – none healthy – for shutting down that area of life.

Sexual orgasm is unquestionably the most wonderful physical sensation known to humans and animals. The reason is simple: The sexual orgasm encourages and enables the continuation of the species and its DNA. It also shakes up the uterus and the entire genital region like nothing else does. Without the regular occurrence of this “earthquake,” stagnation and pain are inevitable, in my opinion. This is true for both genders, but menstruating females get a monthly report card.

### Closing Thoughts

I do what I can to encourage women to implement an enjoyable exercise program, to let go of past and future worries, and to [eat less food](#).<sup>4</sup> I also work with a psych counselor who uses cognitive behavioral therapy to help patients heal past trauma; and another counselor, a woman, who specializes in freeing up the sexual energies of her female clients.

### References

1. Endometriosis: Overview. Mayo Clinic.
2. Endometriosis: Symptoms and Causes. Mayo Clinic.
3. Medaris A. “Bindi Irwin Said Doctors Dismissed Her Pain, Fatigue, and Nausea for 10 Years. She Had Endometriosis and Needed 37 Lesions Removed.” Insider, March 7, 2023.
4. Kihn ED. “OMAD and the Shedding of Excess Yin.” *Acupuncture Today*, January 2023.

AUGUST 2023